subscribers of the said Telephone Exchange as the present Mobile Telephone Tower at Rohor does not cover the whole area completely;

(b) if so, Government's reaction thereon; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) and (b) Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) has planned a cellular mobile telephone tower at Khasdhar (Chirgaon) in the year 2005, which is expected to provide mobile coverage to Jangla in District Shimla.

(c) Does not arise in view of (a) and (b) above.

**Communication facilities in U.P.**

†2242. SHRI NAND ;KISHORE YADAV: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there is dearth of communication facilities in the rural areas of Eastern Uttar Pradesh as compared to the urban areas;

(b) the details of existing communication facilities in the rural and urban areas; and

(c) the steps taken by Government to overcome the disparity between the rural and urban areas and further to extend the rural telecom facilities?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) and (b) The number of telephones in rural areas are lower than that in urban areas of East Uttar Pradesh. The details of existing communications facilities being provided by BSNL in the rural and urban areas as on 31.10.2004 are as given below:—

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

| Sl. No. | Item | Rural | Urban |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | DELs (Wired) (Lines) | 412857 | 1224814 |
| 2 | WLL Connections (Lines) | 79067 | 25091 |
| 3 | Number of exchanges (Nos.) | 1754 | 543 |
| 4 | VPTs (Nos.) | 76004 | Not applicable |
| 5 | Cellular Connections (Lines) | none | 644873 |

In addition, the private operators are also providing telecom services.

(c) BSNL has planned to provide 45000 lines during 2004-05 in the rural areas of P(East) including 5,000 landline connections and 40.000 connection on WLL. upto 31.10.2004, 8828 landline connections and 3770 on WLL have been provided in rural area during the current year.

A non-lapsable universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) has been set up to fund telecom services being provided by both public and private sector operators in the rural and remote areas at affordable and reasonable prices. Such a support is expected to enhance the availability of telecom services in rural areas.

**Contract between BSNL and Reliance**

2243. DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(b) whether BSNL and Reliance group of industries were given a contract for setting up community phones in 50,000 villages with support from the Universal Services Obligation (USO) fund;

(b) if so, whether any contract between Government and these companies have been signed;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether Government have identified 50,000 villages for the purpose; and

(e) if so, by when this project is likely to start?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) M/s Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL)